

2017 NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR SCOTTISH EDUCATION

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

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“In the next phase of the Curriculum for Excellence journey, Scotland has the opportunity to lead the world in developing an innovative national assessment, evaluation and improvement framework.”

Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective. OECD, 2015

Foreword



I have set out my intention to deliver clarity of purpose for all who are involved in Scottish education. Currently, we have a number of plans setting out key activity across the system.

In publishing this 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, I am bringing information together in a single, definitive document that explains for everyone how we will secure educational improvement.

The vision, the priorities and the drivers of improvement we identified last year have stakeholder support, and remain as true and as important now as they did when the first National Improvement Framework was published 11 months ago. It is likely that the sources of evidence to inform our knowledge will continue to develop over the coming year,

so these will be updated on the Scottish Government website as they emerge.

This Improvement Plan brings together the improvement activities from the Delivery Plan published in June, and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan published in September, and sets out our high-level strategic plans for improvement and identifies specific improvement activity. I am also publishing today the 2016 National Improvement Framework Evidence Report.

The primary purpose of the National Improvement Framework is to drive improvement for children and young people. To make that happen, we need a clear flow of information and clear actions on delivering improvement in all parts of the education system. Education Scotland is writing to all schools today to share with them clear and succinct guidance on what they need to consider to make the priorities of the National Improvement Framework a reality in their school.

There is, for all of us, a moral imperative to realise the key priorities of this Framework and Plan:- raising attainment; closing the poverty-related attainment gap; improving health and wellbeing, improving positive school-leaver destinations and achieving our ambition of excellence and equity in Scottish education.

The OECD and our International Council of Education Advisers have endorsed our approach to education in Scotland, and have provided advice about where we need to improve. We are on course to deliver these improvements through the actions we have in place. We will continue to build on these in 2017 as we consider the recommendations of the governance review and the National Parent Forum's review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

I will focus relentlessly on the pace and intensity of implementation. We must come together to drive forward the improvements that our children and young people so richly deserve.

John Swinney MSP

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

13 December 2016

Introduction

The 2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan is now the definitive plan for our collective work. It brings together improvement activity from both the Delivery Plan and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan and also includes improvement actions on parental and family engagement in keeping with our commitments within the Delivery Plan.

Our vision for education in Scotland

- **Excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed; and
- **Achieving equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

We need Scottish education to deliver both **excellence** in terms of ensuring children and young people acquire a broad range of skills and capacities at the highest levels, whilst also delivering **equity** so that every child and young person should thrive and have the best opportunity to succeed regardless of their social circumstances or additional needs.

Key priorities of the National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan is designed to help us deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity; galvanising efforts and aligning our collective improvement activities across all partners in the education system to address our key priorities. These priorities remain as:

- **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy**
- **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children**
- **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing**
- **Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people**

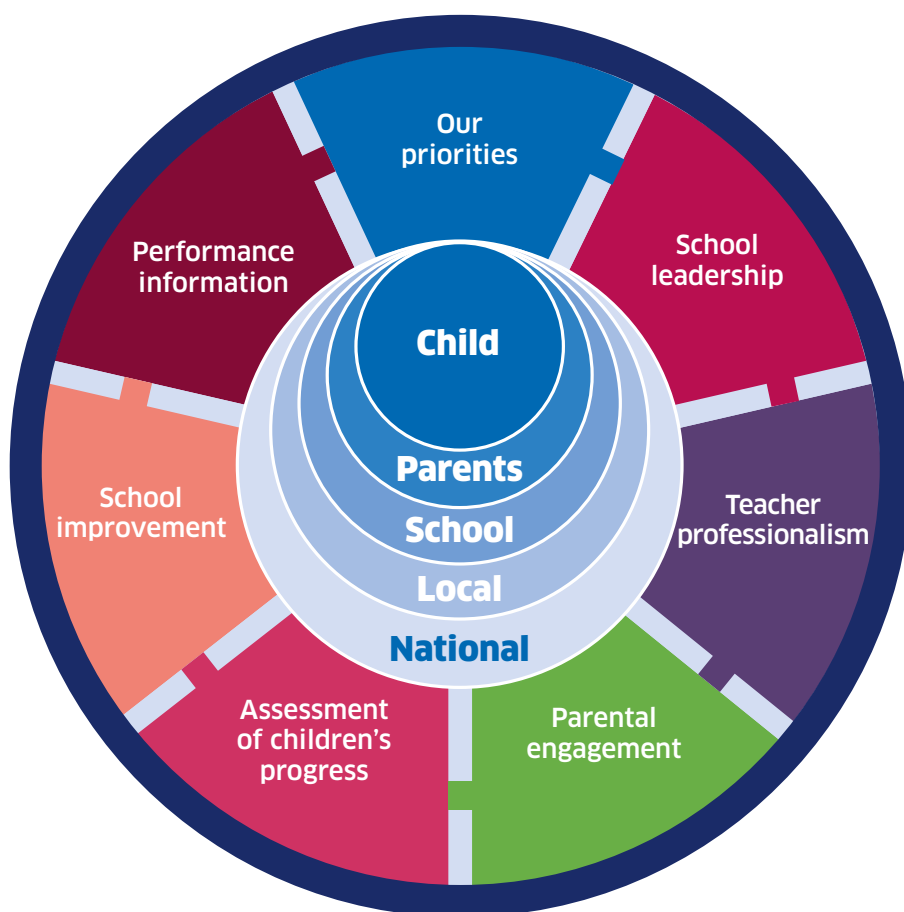
Everyone working in Scottish education should be clear about how they can contribute to addressing these priorities. Local authority and school improvement plans should reflect these priorities and ensure the clear line of sight between local and national expectations. There may be further improvement priorities at school level based on local needs and self-evaluation.

The priorities are likely to evolve over time as issues are addressed successfully and new evidence identifies emerging priorities.

Drivers of improvement

Key drivers of improvement will build on much of the positive work already underway in Scottish education. They provide a focus and structure for gathering evidence, which can then be analysed to identify where we can make further improvements. These areas have been identified to ensure that we have the right type of evidence sources to contribute to our priorities and minimise unintended consequences. They are all equally important. The links and connections across these key areas are essential to enable continuous improvement.

The following sections set out the detail of those new actions we are taking, where appropriate, as well as bringing together all of the improvement activity from the Delivery Plan published in June and the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan published in September.



School leadership



What is this?

The quality and impact of leadership within schools – at all levels and roles.

Why is this important?

Leadership is recognised as one of the most important aspects of the success of any school. Leaders at all levels who are empowered, and who empower others to take ownership of their own learning, have a strong track record of ensuring the highest quality of learning and teaching. This in turn helps to ensure that all children achieve the best possible outcomes. Gathering evidence on the quality of school leadership will help us to identify and share what works and provide support and intervention where leadership needs to improve.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

Highly effective leadership is key to ensuring the highest possible standards and expectations are shared across a school to achieve excellence and equity for all. Through evaluating leadership and, crucially, leadership of change, we will be able to focus on where leadership action is delivering excellent outcomes for all children and closing the attainment gap through targeted intervention. We will also have evidence on the extent to which professional skills and competences of headteachers are being developed and maintained.

Improvement activity

New

We will work with partners across Scottish education to support more teachers to take the step to headship including publishing a nationally agreed action plan by **June 2017**, further to the conclusion of the Working Group on Headteacher Recruitment.

Ongoing

Further to the conclusion of the governance review consultation in **January 2017**, we will consider leadership throughout the system, building on existing models and supporting the development of school clusters and regional models. This will support a strengthened middle and highlight the importance of collaborative leadership.

We will publish information about the range, quality and impact of professional learning for leadership across Scotland's schools by **June 2017**.

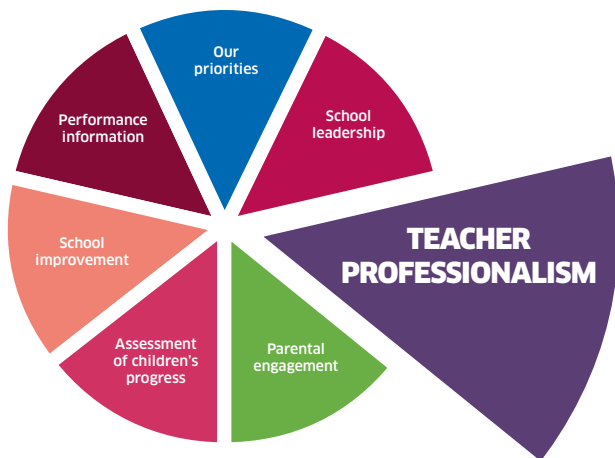
We will continue to support the Scottish College for Educational Leadership in its vital role in supporting leadership development for all education practitioners across Scotland. This will include new packages of support for aspiring, new and experienced headteachers. The Excellence in Headship programme for experienced headteachers will be in place by **March 2017** and will include professional learning opportunities to strengthen and expand school leadership skills, an international exchange programme for school leaders, and the development of a network of local champions to support headteachers to draw on local expertise and work in partnership with the wider community.

We remain committed to supporting the Into Headship programme which supports up to 160 aspiring headteachers each year through **to 2018/19**. This will represent an investment of £1.5 million from 2016 onwards.

We will make holding the Standard for Headship mandatory for all new headteachers by **August 2019**. We are currently consulting on the legislation that will achieve this.

We will collect and analyse relevant information on school leadership from inspection and local authority self-evaluation by **December 2017**.

Teacher professionalism



What is this?

Teacher professionalism demonstrates the overall quality of the teaching workforce in Scotland and the impact of their professional learning on children's progress and achievement.

Why is this important?

The quality of teaching is a key factor in improving children's learning and the outcomes they achieve. In Scotland we have a highly professional, graduate teaching workforce with high professional standards, which are set by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). We want to continue to improve the professionalism of our teachers and the quality and impact of their professional learning. The focus is on teacher professionalism, but we recognise that many other people contribute to children and young people's learning and development.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

There is a strong link between teachers' professional skills and competences and the quality of children's learning experiences. Ensuring the highest professional standards for all teachers in Scotland will help to ensure the highest standards and expectations for all children. Consistent, well-moderated teachers' professional judgement data on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy will help us to focus accurately on the difference in attainment between the most and least disadvantaged children and take further action as a result. We want all new teachers to develop as enquiring professionals who are highly confident in teaching literacy and numeracy, supporting health and wellbeing, using technology and data effectively to enhance learning and teaching, and ensuring equality. This is critical to ensure the strongest possible progression in learning for all children.

Improvement activity

New

In **2017**, we will take forward a range of actions under our STEM strategy to raise levels of STEM enthusiasm, skills, and knowledge including new and enhanced STEM Career-Long Professional Learning for practitioners. This will include a greater emphasis on connecting STEM learning in schools and centres and development of STEM skills, to the world of work.

109 teaching students at Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde took up the offer of studying for the Catholic Teacher Certificate during 2016 and building on this success we will again look to support this initiative **in 2017**.

Ongoing

We will encourage more people into early learning and childcare and teaching, particularly those groups under-represented in teaching (men and minority ethnic communities) as well as in particular subjects (STEM) and geographical areas. In **early 2017** we will extend our teacher recruitment campaign, building on the positive work of the current campaign, to address these issues.

From **Autumn 2018** we will extend support for Masters in Early Years to provide leadership in this sector.

We are working with the University of Edinburgh to develop a Scottish Masters programme for Initial Teacher Education in **2016/17** covering primary and secondary allowing a clear focus on transition between primary and secondary.

In 2016 we supported teachers' professional learning through an investment of close to £1 million in Masters level learning. In 2017 we will again consider how best to support high quality professional learning for teachers. We will also carry out a research project to be completed by **December 2017** to evaluate the impact of this substantial long-term investment in masters level learning for teachers.

Alongside this work, we will significantly streamline the current range of guidance and related material on Curriculum for Excellence, based on feedback from teachers. By **January 2017**, a new, much simpler set of key resources will be available on the new National Improvement Hub.

We will introduce a new training and induction programme for childminders to support the development of skills and training for all childminders working in the early learning and childcare sector **by September 2017**.

We will work with Education Scotland and GTCS to undertake a review of Initial Teacher Education programmes to report by **April 2017**, to ensure that they provide appropriate detail on content for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, data literacy and equality across both primary and secondary sectors.

We will work with Initial Teacher Education providers, GTCS and other key partners to address issues of staffing supply and capacity at a national level in order to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge. On 30 November we announced that 11 new routes to teaching would be developed targeting shortage subjects including STEM, and geographical areas by Scottish universities, and that this development work would be supported by £1 million of Scottish Government funding. These new routes will be developed with the expectation that students will be recruited to them **in 2017** and will include accelerated teacher education, expanded distance learning opportunities, a focus on strengthening skills of primary teachers in science and developing specialisms in transition between primary and secondary schools.

We will develop a new teacher education training route which is focused on getting high quality graduates into priority areas and subjects. This will be in place by **Summer 2017**. This will build on the model developed in partnership with the University of Aberdeen to attract career changers to the profession.

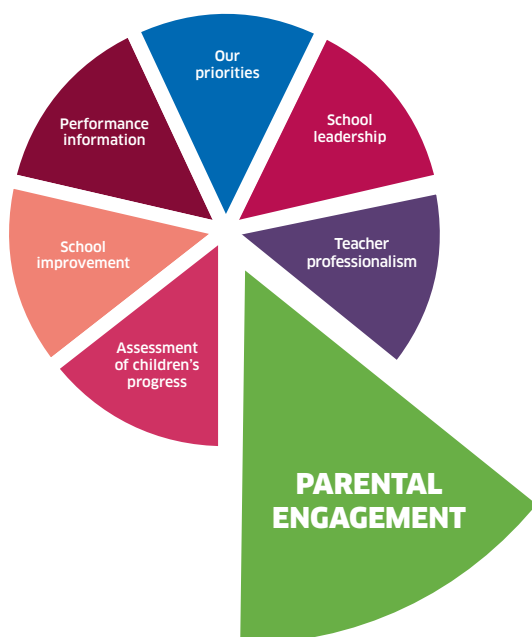
We will provide development funding for the **2017/18** academic year to the University of the Highlands and Islands to build on its model of delivering Initial Teacher Education through local colleges.

We will maintain our strong focus on Gaelic teacher supply with promotional campaigns which will be led **in 2017** by Bòrd na Gàidhlig; innovative courses such as Gaelic Immersion for Teachers (GIFT) and Streap, which support teachers who wish to transfer to Gaelic teaching; and new routes into Gaelic teaching being introduced by the University of Edinburgh, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the University of the Highlands and Islands.

We will develop professional standards for employability and enterprise by **June 2017** to support practitioner learning in relation to Developing the Young Workforce 2016/17.

We will work with GTCS to provide more support to teachers on equality issues through Career Long Professional Learning to be in place by **August 2017**.

Parental engagement



What is this?

Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents and carers, families and professionals work together to support children's learning. Schools involve parents and carers by enabling ongoing, two-way communications between home and school; providing parents and carers with opportunities to contribute to leading improvements and making decisions that affect the school; and using the skills of parents and carers to enrich the curriculum.

Why is this important?

The available international evidence confirms that parental involvement and engagement in children's learning supports improved attainment and achievement. Research shows that when parents and carers support their children's learning, and when children live in a stimulating home learning environment, it improves children's attainment and achievement. Family learning encourages family members to learn together, fostering positive attitudes to lifelong learning. We want to improve and increase the ways in which parents, carers and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children and increase the voice of parents and carers in leading improvements within schools.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

Parental and family engagement is a key factor in helping all children achieve the highest standards whilst reducing inequity and closing the attainment gap. The information that we gather will inform our knowledge of where parental engagement is strong and where it requires further attention. This will include monitoring levels of parental engagement, and involvement in, and satisfaction with, learning provision in different communities.

Improvement activity

New

Education Scotland will continue to provide support on family learning, taking full account of its review of the evidence on family learning programmes, expected to report in **December 2016**.

Education Scotland will introduce revised pre-inspection questionnaires for parents from **January 2017**. This will help improve the range and quality of the feedback from parents on their involvement in and satisfaction with their child's early learning and childcare setting or school.

We will respond in full to the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 – final recommendations are expected in **March 2017**. The Scottish Government's response will be considered in the context of our education governance review, which will have a strong focus on supporting parents to play a full role in the life and work of their child's school.

Ongoing

We will introduce a new Education Bill in the second year of this Parliament. Building on the responses to the governance and parental involvement reviews, a consultation on a Bill will be held **early in 2017**.

We will promote the opportunities afforded by the development of extended childcare to provide family and employability support for parents by **June 2017**. We will also work with local authorities to understand the nature of parental demand for early learning and childcare in their areas, so that provision of additional free hours can be sufficiently flexible to respond to need. This will include the development of opportunities for further integration with additional hours and out-of-school care and the provision of family and employability support to parents by **June 2017**.

We will roll out the new Baby Boxes programme from **January 2017** as another route to ensure that materials and advice are provided to new parents. This pilot starts in two local authorities in January 2017. The full programme starts in **June 2017**.

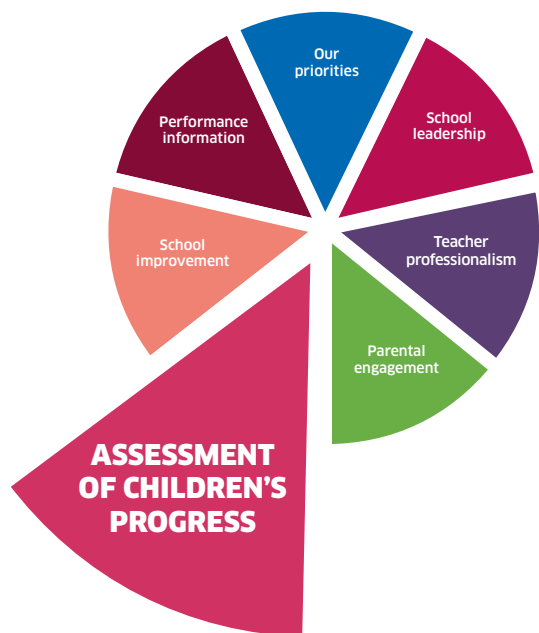
We will further improve ParentZone – the national online resource for parents – by **August 2018**. We will publish additional clear information on each school on a range of key measures, such as attendance rates, children's progress and grades from school inspection. By the end of **January 2017**, we will provide national guidance to local authorities and schools to improve the consistency and quality of reporting to parents about their children's progress and achievement.

We will continue to deliver and improve our national campaigns and gifting programmes to parents and families across Scotland – Bookbug, PlayTalkRead and Read, Write, Count – providing advice and materials to parents to support their children's learning from an early age and extend the Read, Write, Count Programme into P4-7 in areas of high deprivation from **April 2017**.

We will continue to implement our Parental Communication Plan for the National Improvement Framework. This will include collaborative work with the National Parent Forum of Scotland in early 2017 to make available a range of parent-friendly information about the Framework and the drivers of improvement.

We will work with Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities to develop progressive family learning programmes by the **end of 2017** and roll out this approach by the **end of 2018**.

Assessment of children's progress



What is this?

Assessment of children's progress includes a range of evidence on what children learn and achieve throughout their education and how well this prepares them for life beyond school. This includes Curriculum for Excellence levels, skills, qualifications and other awards, and achievement of positive and sustained destinations.

Progress in learning for children with complex additional support needs will be evaluated at an individual level, through agreed plans and next steps, which will be personalised.

Why is this important?

We all need more robust and consistent evidence which will help us in improving health and wellbeing, raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. We need to know the size of the attainment gap at different ages and stages, across Scotland, in order to take the right action to close it and we need to know whether the attainment gap is narrowing over time in order to know that the actions we are taking are the right ones. The annual collection of teacher professional judgement data on the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels and, from August 2017, the use of national standardised assessments, will lead to more consistent assessment approaches within the broad general education. Other important measures within this driver include positive destinations and the quality of career information and guidance available to young people.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

Data gathered on children's progress is essential to achieving excellence and equity. Improved data on children's progress at key stages, including differences between those from the least and most deprived areas, will allow for planning further interventions to ensure that all children achieve as well as they can. The quality of career information, advice and guidance and monitoring positive destinations will tell us about how successful young people are when they leave school. This will also tell us about the choices young people make and the difference in the levels of positive destinations for young people from the most and least disadvantaged backgrounds. This data will help teachers to identify areas where good practice exists and which high-impact interventions should be shared. This is equally important for children who experience barriers to learning caused by additional support needs.

Improvement activity

New

We will ensure that nurseries in the most disadvantaged areas in Scotland benefit from an additional teacher or degree qualified early learning and childcare professional from **August 2018**.

By August 2017, we will develop and implement a package of support for all schools in Scotland to strengthen attachment, resilience and mental wellbeing in children and young people. This will be evidence-based and include interventions that support the link between physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Ongoing

In addition to the benchmark guidance for literacy and numeracy published in August, we will provide similar advice on the achievement of curriculum levels for the remaining curriculum areas, by the **end of 2016**.

From **April 2017** an additional £100 million per annum will be allocated directly to schools on the basis of free school meals eligibility. This new funding will reach at least 95 per cent of schools in Scotland and will be supported by:

- an operational framework which will support schools in their spending decisions and set out our approach to distribution, monitoring impact and reporting on improving individual children's progress;
- development of a Scotland specific learning and teaching toolkit providing strategies which are proven to help to close the poverty-related attainment gap;
- a series of regional engagement events which every headteacher in Scotland will be invited to. These events will take place in **February and March 2017**. This will enable us to work with headteachers directly and give them advice and support on using pupil equity funding to close the poverty-related attainment gap in their context.

We will continue to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge authorities and schools and a number of national programmes, including staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and school leadership with £50 million per annum from the Attainment Scotland Fund.

We will implement the Getting it Right for Looked After Children Strategy in full. We will take a tailored approach to young people who most need support, increasing positive destinations from school for looked after children by 4 percentage points per annum, resulting in parity **by 2021**.

We will implement our refreshed youth justice strategy: Preventing Offending – Getting it Right for Children and Young People. Our priorities will be to advance the whole system approach, improving life chances and developing capacity and improvement in the workforce. We will report on progress by **June 2017**.

We will begin work in **2016/17** on a strategy for families with disabled children, linking to activity to develop the Child and Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

From January 2017 we will implement the Making Maths Count report recommendations to encourage greater enthusiasm for, and a greater understanding of, the value of mathematics amongst children and young people, their parents, carers and the wider public.

We will drive forward the actions in our new Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy **throughout 2017**, with a view to delivering the Strategy's vision of using technology to improve attainment across the Curriculum in the next 3-5 years.

We will deliver the new Universal Pathway for Health Visitors including the new Child Health Reviews to support early intervention and prevention in those crucial early years. This work is already underway. **During 2017** and within the parameters of legislation, we will examine arrangements for information sharing to facilitate appropriate data sharing between professionals on children's progress from the early years onwards.

We will carry out implementation testing of new standardised assessment materials in schools across Scotland **from December 2016 until May 2017**. The results will inform teacher professional judgement of children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

We will consider and agree requirements for standardised assessment for Gaelic Medium Education by **June 2017**. These assessments will be available in **August 2018**.

We will provide moderation and support for teacher professional judgement **from October 2016**; ensuring that practitioners have a common understanding of expectations in literacy and numeracy across all curriculum areas.

In **December 2016** we will publish plans for gathering information about the health and wellbeing of children and young people including the data gathered at early years stages.

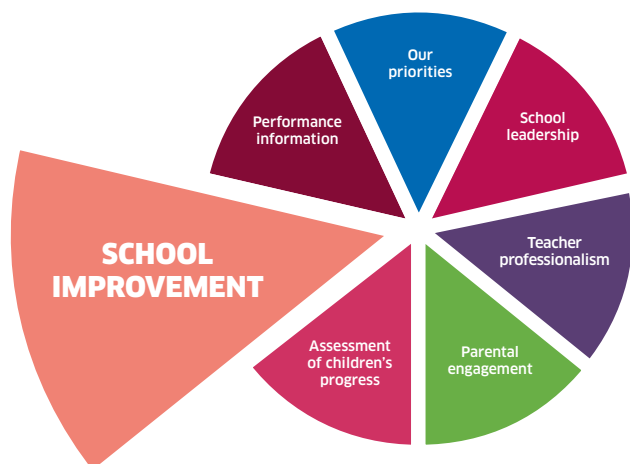
We will develop a framework for educational interventions and strategies to improve attainment **in December 2016**, including practical strategies and approaches to building positive attitudes, confidence and capability in literacy and numeracy for all children and young people regardless of background and circumstance.

We will appoint an independent Commissioner for Fair Access to act as a powerful voice for our most disadvantaged learners. We will ensure that **by 2030**, students from the 20 per cent most deprived areas make up 20 per cent of higher education entrants.

We will retain the Education Maintenance Allowance as an entitlement to ensure that school pupils, college students and young people on Activity Agreements from financially disadvantaged households, can receive support to overcome any financial barriers to remain in learning.

We will continue to provide, through the Developing the Young Workforce programme, more opportunities for young people to experience high quality, work-related learning, and to gain vocational qualifications. We will increase the percentage of school leavers attaining vocational qualifications at SCQF level 5 and above by the end of school year **2020/21**.

School improvement



What is this?

The overall quality of education provided by each school in Scotland and its effectiveness in driving further improvement.

Why is this important?

School improvement focuses on the quality of education, including learning, teaching and assessment, as well as the quality of the partnerships that are in place to support children and young people with their broader needs. These are essential elements to raise attainment for all children and close the poverty-related attainment gap. We have a good education system in Scotland, with schools achieving good outcomes for children. We want to continue to improve this so that more children experience very good and excellent education services, delivered by self-improving, empowered schools and key partners such as community learning and development professionals.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

Evaluating learning, teaching and assessment and the quality of what goes on in classrooms will tell us how good the experience is for children, as we strive towards excellence for all. We know that for children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds, the gap in learning can develop from a young age. Evaluating school improvement and how schools work with partners will help us to focus on early and sustained intervention and support for children and their families. School inspection, school self-evaluation and local authority reporting on attainment and achievement will tell us how well schools are achieving equity for all children. This will include the school's success at raising attainment for all, whilst closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. We expect that this self-evaluation will be carried out increasingly with partners and other services. Data on improving attendance and reducing exclusions are critical factors in ensuring that children's time at school and their opportunities to succeed are maximised.

Improvement activity

New

We will publish a Quality Action Plan for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) **in summer 2017** to underpin the expansion of ELC entitlement to 1,140 hours by 2020. This will include actions on vital issues including the coherence of the Early Level, Transitions, Play and links between ELC and parent/family support.

We will remove mandatory unit assessments for National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers on a phased basis over a three-year period from school year **2017/18**. This will reduce workload for teachers and young people.

From **January 2017**, we will work with teachers and local authority colleagues to gain a clear understanding of Curriculum for Excellence achievement of a level data and senior phase assessment data available through Insight. Using this data we will work together to drive improvements in learner outcomes at local level, particularly through the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative.

Ongoing

Throughout **2017**, we will intensify our programme for reducing workload in schools based on ideas contributed by teacher associations and other partners in education. Inspection teams will continue to challenge unnecessary bureaucracy and offer practical assistance to schools and local authorities including supporting the use of school improvement planning to tackle bureaucracy by **June 2017**.

School inspections and other Education Scotland evaluative activity will, from **September 2016**, be more focused on the priorities within the National Improvement Framework. We will gather evidence on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, progress in raising attainment and achievement, and the leadership of change through school inspection.

We will support the continuing growth of Gaelic Medium Education in schools by implementing new rights for parents and by providing more resources for teachers and learners, by **February 2017**.

Inspections in early learning and childcare settings, schools and learning communities will contribute to professional learning and capacity building to support the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence; and provide evidence on implementation by **June 2017**.

We will expect all schools to have clear strategies in place across the curriculum in school year **2016/17** to reduce the attainment gap in their context.

Developing the Young Workforce will continue to be a focus of inspection and review activity across all sectors. In school year **2016/17** there will be a specific focus on how well the Career Education Standard (3-18) and the Work Placements Standard are being implemented.

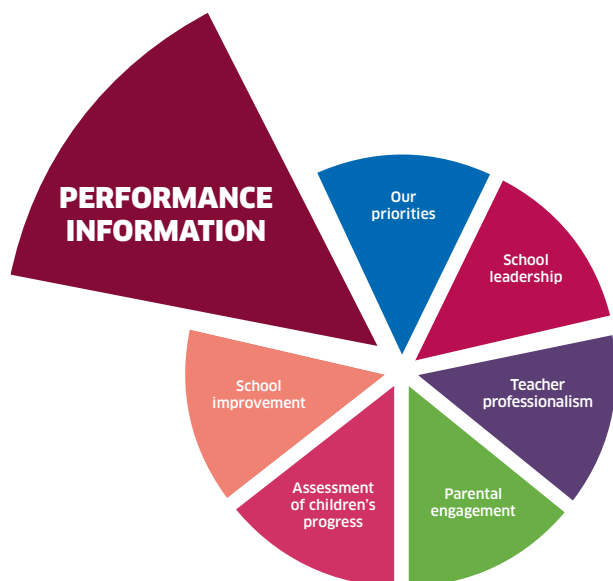
In **September 2017**, we will gather information from 2016/17 school inspections and other evaluative activity on the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, progress in raising attainment and achievement, and the quality of partnerships.

We will extend the reach and impact of the Attainment Advisers, through regional alignment, to promote collaboration and joint delivery across local authorities from **October 2016**. Using the data available from the Framework, the Attainment Adviser team will work directly with schools where they can make the biggest difference to accelerate efforts to close the gap. Educational leadership of the programme will be extended through a new Chief Adviser role.

We will develop by **June 2017** a new Standards and Evaluation Framework, which will set out clear expectations for schools and the focus and frequency of school inspection.

We will, by the **end of 2017**, support the publication of school-level reporting for parents and communities against their own action plans.

Performance information



What is this?

All of the information and data we need to get a full picture of how well Scottish education is improving. We will gather together and analyse the data collected from each of the other key drivers of improvement.

Why is this important?

Evidence suggests that we must build a sound understanding of the range of factors that contribute to a successful education system. This is supported by international evidence which confirms that there is no single measure that will provide a full picture of performance. We want to use a balanced range of measures to evaluate Scottish education and take action to improve.

How will this help to achieve excellence and equity for all children?

Through the National Improvement Framework and the annual Evidence Report we will build up a clear picture of progress across the key drivers and of overall progress towards our key priorities. Analysis of the evidence gathered will help us identify where things are working well and approaches that could be shared as good practice. It will also highlight areas for further improvement and where action is required. This activity will have a specific focus on excellence and equity for all and will inform school, local authority and national improvement planning. It will also be used to inform policy developments and decisions about priorities moving forward, including the allocation of resources and support.

Improvement activity

New

From **February 2017**, we will roll out training in the use of the standardised assessment tool to equip teachers with the necessary data literacy skills to identify areas for improvement.

We will engage with key stakeholders by end **June 2017** to discuss plans to reduce the attainment gap, together with any possible milestones towards delivery.

Ongoing

We will publish by **December 2016** a research strategy that makes clear any gaps in our evidence base and how these gaps will be filled. We will continue to extend the use of research to underpin the interventions and strategies used in classrooms to close the gap as part of the research strategy. This will include the creation of a national forum for academics and practitioners to come together to ensure that cutting-edge evidence is being implemented in practice, informed by the International Council of Education Advisers.

We will review the learning journey for all 16-24 year olds to ensure that education provision for young people is as effective and efficient as possible and provides more stepping stones for those needing most support from **September 2016**.

We will share evidence by **February 2017**, of what is working in helping us achieve the four key priorities and where further research or evaluation is needed.

We will publish in **May 2017** the literacy results from the 2016 Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy. Given the implementation of the National Improvement Framework and the data that it provides, this will be the final set of results from the SSLN.

We will consider further evidence in particular from early years, Developing the Young Workforce and on health and wellbeing to use in the National Improvement Framework by **December 2017**.

We will publish a draft information 'dashboard' covering the broad general education by **summer 2017**, making detailed performance information available to teachers and local authorities.

We will host an international conference on improvement and the use of performance information, before **July 2017**, to learn about other approaches to using knowledge and high quality data for improvement.

To support current legislation we will publish, in **March 2017**, statutory guidance to support local authorities in carrying out their duties to plan and report on the National Improvement Framework, including advice on how they use performance information for this purpose.

Planning for improvement, reporting and analysis

We know that simply having information is not enough to secure improvement. Effective, system-wide planning, reporting and analysis as part of the National Improvement Framework will help to secure improvement for our education system.

The OECD described the need to strengthen the “middle” of the Scottish education system. The governance review will respond to that recommendation.

Local authorities have the statutory role and function of providing education for Scotland’s children and a duty to secure improvement. Local arrangements are already in place to support improvement but more could be done to increase the pace and focus that is required, either in particular areas or for particular groups of children. As the outcomes of the governance review become clear, we will seek to deliver on the key principles we have agreed with local government.

School improvement activity is at the heart of securing better outcomes for our children and young people. More detailed guidance and support for schools is available from Education Scotland at: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/nif-driving-excellence.aspx>

Following consultation, it is our intention that the legal requirement on schools to prepare and publish annual school improvement plans and standards and quality reports linked explicitly to the Framework will take effect in August 2017, as will the duty on local authorities to produce annual plans and reports. Schools and local authorities will continue to self-evaluate and report against local priorities alongside the Framework’s key priorities.

Planning and reporting on the Framework will form part of a wider public service planning and reporting landscape as part of a new cycle of improvement, aligned at school, local and national level, and taking account of local community planning and priorities. There will be clear links to Local Outcome Improvement Plans, Children’s Services Plans and education standards and quality reports.

A wide range of other partners, including those represented on the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, play a key role in delivering for our children and young people. The governance review will consider the roles and functions of some of these organisations and will define the delivery and decision-making structures at system level.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/thegovernancereview>

Measuring the attainment gap

We have committed to engaging with stakeholders to discuss plans to close the poverty-related attainment gap, including milestones towards delivery. A key focus of these discussions will be to avoid the creation of perverse incentives through whatever targets, milestones or aims that may be set nationally or locally.

Measurement can take a variety of forms, from hard performance delivery indicators to milestones and longer-term stretch aims. Our approach will be to encourage the intelligent use of data at school, local and national level, with the primary focus on driving improvement rather than simply for accountability.

Improvement measures are, and will continue to be, developed to harness the energy and motivation of those delivering on the ground and demonstrate progress towards desired outcomes.

At a national level, as a first step, we will use the data that will be published each year through the National Improvement Framework Evidence Report to show the poverty-related attainment gap at different stages of school and across literacy and numeracy.

We are clear that we want to see the poverty-related attainment gap close wherever, whenever and however it is measured. The cycle of deprivation must be interrupted at every opportunity. The data in the 2016 National Improvement Framework Evidence Report provides a range of possible ways of measuring the attainment gap. We will work with key stakeholders in the coming months to explore and agree which specific measures are most useful to drive improvement across all stages of a child or young person's life and will use these to measure progress towards closing the gap.

ANNEX A

SUMMARY OF COMPLETED ACTIVITY FROM THE DELIVERY PLAN AND CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

We are addressing the ongoing issue of teacher recruitment in the North East through the Transition Training Fund, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Through investment of £400,000 in **2016/17** we provided guaranteed employment for up to 20 individuals from the oil and gas sector while they trained as teachers in STEM subjects.

We established a new International Council of Education Advisers during summer 2016, with the first meeting of the Council taking place in **September 2016**.

In **August 2016** we established a panel of teachers to discuss key developments in Scottish education and to monitor workload demands.

We provided funding to ensure that we have the right number of teachers, with the right skills, in the right places to educate our young people. All local authorities in Scotland were allocated an appropriate share of £88 million funding in financial year **2016/17** to meet the agreement to maintain teacher numbers and support probationer teachers.

We have ensured that, where appropriate, the SQA, Education Scotland, schools and local authorities delivered the commitments made in the first report of the Assessment and National Qualifications Group. We have also ensured that the SQA delivered the actions to simplify and streamline qualifications set out in the 51 'subject reports' published in May 2016.¹

The senior phase self-evaluation guide for practitioners in schools and colleges was delivered in **June 2016**.

In **August 2016**, we published a clear and concise statement on Curriculum for Excellence and benchmark guidance for assessing literacy and numeracy at each CfE level.

In **September 2016**, following consultation with the Assessment and National Qualifications Group, we announced changes to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications to reduce the burden of assessment for teachers and young people.

We worked with schools to focus the curriculum to meet children's needs fully and close the gap in early years settings and primary schools. For example, we published ways in which the vocabulary gap can be closed through a literacy-rich curriculum in P1-3 in **August 2016**.

We worked with the National Parent Forum of Scotland and other parent organisations to develop a comprehensive parent communication plan for the National Improvement Framework in **September 2016**.

We published the results of the Financial Review of the Early Learning and Childcare sector in **September 2016**.

Data collection of teachers' professional judgement of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels was completed in **September 2016** and published in December 2016.

¹ These actions have either been completed or superseded by the decision to remove mandatory unit assessments from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to be phased in over three years from 2017-18.

HM Inspectors carried out a focused review of the demands placed on schools by each local authority in relation to Curriculum for Excellence. This review reported with recommendations in **September 2016**.

From September 2016, the SQA will also consult stakeholders on how best to streamline its course documentation for the national qualifications.²

In December we provided advice and support to ensure that schools, parents and communities are effectively involved in improvement planning on the basis of the evidence generated by the National Improvement Framework and school self-evaluation.

The first round of Read, Write, Count gift bags were gifted to families of P2 and P3 children in **November 2016**.

In autumn 2016, we conducted a thorough analysis of all the evidence generated by the National Improvement Framework in consultation with stakeholders and with scrutiny from the new International Council of Education Advisers.

In December 2016, we published an annual National Improvement Framework Evidence Report, with progress against the four priorities and evidence against all of the six drivers of improvement.

In December 2016 we published performance indicators on employability skills and positive school leaver destinations as part of the National Improvement Framework Evidence Report.

We developed evidence from early years activity for inclusion in the National Improvement Framework Evidence Report in **December 2016**.

In December 2016, we published an improvement plan and revisions to the National Improvement Framework in consultation with key stakeholders.

We collected and analysed relevant information on school leadership from inspection and local authority self-evaluation in advance of **January 2017**.

We issued advice **in December 2016** to support more consistent and robust annual reporting on school improvement.

In December 2016, we published information for parents on a school-by-school basis, including for the first time information on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy at stages P1, P4, P7 and S3.

In 2016 we worked with GTCS to explore options to bring further flexibility into registration for teachers who have qualified outside Scotland while ensuring that our high level of teacher professional standards are maintained. Progress included the introduction of a new category of provisional (conditional) registration and updated registration criteria ensuring the requirement is for broad equivalence to a degree and Scottish teaching qualification.

² These actions have either been completed or superseded by the decision to remove mandatory unit assessments from National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to be phased in over three years from 2017-18.

ANNEX B

REFERENCES AND USEFUL LINKS

Assessing Children's Progress – information for parents and parents

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework/NationalImprovementFramework>

Curriculum for Excellence

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp>

Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 5: A Framework for Assessment, Scottish Government, February 2011, ISBN: 978-0-7559-994-5 (web only)

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/BtC5Framework_tcm4-653230.pdf

Curriculum for Excellence Management Board

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/learningandteaching/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/howwasthecurriculumdeveloped/managementboard/index.asp>

Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Plan 2016/17

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/CfE201617ImplementationPlan_tcm4-876558.pdf

Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/3853/0>

Developing the Young Workforce – Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy, Scottish Government, December 2014, ISBN 978-1-7854-4033-5

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7750/0>

Education Working for All!: Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce Final Report, Scottish Government, June 2014 ISBN 978-1-7841-2523-3

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/4089/0>

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity – a governance review:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/thegovernancereview>

GIRFEC

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/1141/0065063.pdf>

Health and Wellbeing in Curriculum for Excellence

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi>

How Good is Our Community Learning and Development? Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education, May 2006, ISBN 0-7053-1090-6

http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/hgio2cld_tcm4-684586.pdf

How Good is Our School? 4th edition, Education Scotland, September 2015, ISBN 978-0-7053-1889-1

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/h/hgios4/introduction.asp>

Insight

<http://www.gov.scot/insightbenchmarking>

International Council of Education Advisers

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/govscot>

OECD Education Policy Outlook 2015, Making Reforms Happen

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-policy-outlook-2015-9789264225442-en.htm>

OECD Report Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD perspective

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/improving-schools-in-scotland.htm>

Parental Involvement Act:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Parents>

Parent Communications Plan

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/NationalImprovementFramework/govscot>

Parentzone

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/>

Scottish Attainment Challenge

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment>

Synergies for Better Learning: An International Perspective on Evaluation and Assessment, OECD Reviews of Evaluation and assessment in Education, Organisation for Economic Development (OECD), April 2013, OECD Publishing, Paris ISBN 9789264190641

http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/synergies-for-better-learning-an-international-perspective-on-evaluation-and-assessment_9789264190658-en

Teaching Scotland's Future

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/01/13092132/0>

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